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The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

Executive Registry
82-3477

9 July 1982

Editor
Norwalk Hour
346 Main Avenue
Norwalk, Connecticut 06851

Dear Sir:

Your 30 June editorial stating that I must have been involved in illegalities during my 31 year career with the Central Intelligence Agency represents a grave injustice not only to me, personally, but to the many dedicated CIA employees who honorably serve their country, often with great personal sacrifice.

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence conducted a scrupulous investigation of me to ensure my worthiness for the position of Deputy Director of Central Intelligence. If you check the public record of that investigation and my subsequent confirmation hearing, you will find it replete with references to my "honesty, integrity and forthrightness." I believe the Committee's unanimous endorsement of my nomination represented a strong vote of confidence both in my integrity and that of the institution I have served for 31 years.

Your readers deserve to know that we in CIA take pride in living up to the confidence President Reagan expressed in us during his recent visit to the Agency when he said, "I have full confidence that you will do your job vigorously and imaginatively while making sure that your activity is lawful, constitutional, and in keeping with the traditions of our way of life."

Sincerely

[redacted] STAT

John N. McMahon

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NORWALK HOUR (CT)
30 June 1982

Straight Up and Candid

Norwalk's John McMahon is widely regarded as a sound choice for deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, a position for which he has been unanimously confirmed by the Senate. He is an able career intelligence officer, never overtly political.

It must be borne in mind, however, that during his 31 years with the CIA McMahon must have had something to do with agency operations which ranged from dubiously proper to the downright illegal. The extent of his involvement is not known. But many Americans surely will applaud Sen. Joseph Biden's admonition to McMahon as his nomination was approved. The Maryland senator warned the CIA's new number two man that there would be trouble were he not to remain "straight up and candid" in his future relations with Congress.

That is not at all a presumptuous warning; it springs from bitter experience. In years past the CIA has engaged in much borderline activity and sometimes clearly has gone over the border in exceeding its mandate, on occasion to the extent of plotting and making attempts on the lives of ruling figures abroad.

Fresh attention has been called to what was at least a borderline activity — the use of journalists to aid in various clandestine activities. The agency has for the first time outlined the extent of such practices in a statement filed as part of the settlement in a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit.

Obnoxious though it may seem, this practice — no longer sanctioned since adoption of a more restrictive policy in 1976 — was a comparatively minor breach.

Biden's admonition to McMahon was appropriate.

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